

AARP: As COVID-19 cases/deaths climb, new analysis reveals Wisconsin nursing homes still lack adequate PPE and staff

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MADISON, WISCONSIN – As COVID-19 cases and deaths in Wisconsin continue to climb, AARP Wisconsin renews its call for Governor Evers and state legislators to better protect nursing home residents and staff from the coronavirus.

The latest release of the [AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard](#) finds concerning trends in Wisconsin's nursing homes, including rising resident/staff cases and deaths, rising shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), and rising staff shortages.

Using data released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services – which is self-reported by nursing homes – the AARP Public Policy Institute, in collaboration with the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University in Ohio, created the AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard to provide four-week snapshots of the virus' infiltration into nursing homes and impact on nursing home residents and staff.

This second dashboard aggregates and analyzes data from nursing homes covering three 4-week time intervals from mid-summer into fall: July 26-Aug. 23, Aug. 24-Sept. 20, and Sept. 21-Oct. 18.

For the period from Sept. 21-Oct. 18, AARP's dashboard reports that Wisconsin

nursing homes had:

- 3.8 new confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100 residents, up from 0.7 in October.
- 0.3 COVID-19 deaths per 100 nursing home residents, up from 0.11 in October.
- 6.4 new confirmed staff COVID-19 cases per 100 residents, up from 2.0 in October.
- 39% of nursing homes that did not have a 1-week supply of PPE.
- 41.1% of nursing homes that had a shortage of direct care workers (nurses and/or aides), up from 34.6 percent in October.
- More than three fourths (77.1%) of Wisconsin nursing homes have reported that staff have been infected with the virus, which is up from 41.6% a month ago.

“While the October dashboard showed Wisconsin was trending better than the national average, the situation has gotten far more dire. Facilities still don’t have the PPE and staffing needed to protect residents,” said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson. “This is a tragedy that must be addressed. Our state leaders need to act to keep residents safe and hold nursing homes accountable.”

AARP has called for the enactment of a plan to protect nursing home and long-term care facility residents, including:

- Prioritizing regular and ongoing testing and adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for residents and staff – as well as inspectors and any visitors.
- Improving transparency focused on daily, public reporting of cases and deaths in facilities; communication with families about discharges and transfers; and accountability for state and federal funding that goes to facilities.
- Ensuring access to in-person visitation following federal and state guidelines for safety, and require continued access to virtual visitation for all residents.
- Ensuring quality care for residents through adequate staffing, oversight, and access to in-person formal advocates, called long-term care ombudsmen.
- Rejecting immunity for long-term care facilities related to COVID-19.

Wilson added: “Wisconsin nursing homes have received at least \$145 million in state and federal funding intended to keep residents safe, but too many measures continue to move in the wrong direction. Governor Evers and the state legislature

must hold facilities accountable and ensure our taxpayer dollars are used to save lives.”

The AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard will continue to be updated every four weeks. The complete dashboard is available at aarp.org/nursinghomedashboard. More resources and information on COVID-19 and nursing homes can be found at aarp.org/nursinghomes.